

Ex-General Pleads Guilty to Charge Of Stealing Guns He Asked for Army

By Paul G. Edwards
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Carl C. Turner, once the Army's top law enforcement officer and the Nixon Administration's first chief U.S. marshal, pleaded guilty in Federal Court yesterday to charges he solicited 136 firearms for the Army from the Chicago police and then stole them.

The 58-year-old retired major general could be sentenced to five years in prison and \$5,000 fine. As soon as Alexandria Federal Judge Oren R. Lewis accepted the guilty plea, government prosecuting attorneys moved to dismiss eight additional charges of soliciting and stealing gifts of firearms, possessing illegal firearms and stealing government-owned guns.

Lewis ordered the charges dismissed and deferred sentencing until after a probation officer's report is received.

Turner still is charged with

four counts of income tax evasion for the years 1965 through 1968. A grand jury accused him of evading payment of \$16,679 in taxes by under-



GEN. CARL C. TURNER

... awaits tax trial

stating his income for those years by \$46,647.

Each of the tax charges carries a maximum sentence of five years in prison and \$5,000 fine. Trial on the charges is set for June 7.

Two of the charges against Turner were dismissed, those alleging theft of government-owned gun, carry maximum sentences of 10 years in prison and fines of \$10,000. Government prosecutors routinely agree to seek dismissal of additional similar charges, including those that carry heavier penalties, in exchange for guilty pleas. Such requests are almost always granted by courts.

U.S. Attorney Brian P. Gettings said in an interview he felt "it was in the best interests of justice" to accept an offer by Turner's lawyers to plead guilty to one of the firearms charges carrying not more than 5 years in prison.

See TURNER, A8, Col. 1

TURNER, From A1

Gettings said he discussed the decision with Henry Peterson, deputy assistant attorney general in the Justice Department's criminal division. A department spokesman said he does not believe Attorney General John N. Mitchell or Will Wilson, his assistant in charge of the criminal division, reviewed the decision.

Mitchell Chose

Mitchell chose Turner to be chief U.S. marshal shortly after the Nixon Administration came into power on the strength of a campaign that included charges of Democratic law-enforcement laxity.

Turner served from March 2 to Sept. 5 in 1969. He resigned when it was learned that he would be a key witness in Senate hearings on alleged service club misdealings from 1964 to 1968 when Turner was Army provost marshal, or top law-enforcement officer.

When the October 1969 hearings focused on the retired general's gun dealings, Turner admitted accepting large quantities of weapons confiscated by Chicago police during 1968 racial disorders but claimed they were gifts to him. Turner collects and trades guns as a hobby.

Chicago police officials denied that the weapons were personal gifts to Turner and insisted the provost marshal knew they were intended for Army training use.

In all, the counts against Turner alleged that he solicited 423 guns from the Chicago police department for the Government and then kept them for his own use.

The 136 firearms involved in the guilty plea were transferred to Turner on Nov. 14, 1968, the grand jury indictment alleged.

Turner told the Senate panel Chicago police officials knew he had retired from the Army two weeks before the Nov. 14 transaction, but the police denied this.

The four remaining tax counts against Turner do not specify the source of alleged unreported income.

The general, however, admitted during the Senate hear-

ings that he sold confiscated weapons given to him and did not report the receipts on his tax return.

He testified that hobbyists were not required to report such income.

Brisk Manner

As he did at his arraignment three months ago, Turner briskly approached the bench when his case came up yesterday, carefully placed his heels

together and stood at attention throughout the 20-minute proceeding.

The general, bald except for a ring of short gray hair, answered the Judge's routine questions with subdued "yes, sirs" and "no, sirs."

You are charged with knowingly soliciting these guns," the Judge said. "Did you do that?"

"Yes, sir," Turner answered.

"Did you represent that these gifts were for the use of the United States Government?"

"Yes, sir."

"And did you intend to use them for own use?"

"Yes, sir."

"And did you in fact convert them to your own use?"

"Yes, sir."

"We treat everyone the same here" Lewis told Turner after accepting his plea. "We have these presentence investigations to find out everything there is to know about you."

"The probation officer will have an in-depth conversation with you. We want to find out how you got into this situation, why you did it. Don't give him some cock-and-bull story. If you don't know what made you do this, just tell him you haven't get the slightest idea."